

lowance. In the first place I am aware that it is a severe trial for any one, even a very well-conditioned person to find himself outflanked and outgeneralled, and, for a person of the temperament of my hon. friend, I admit it was a peculiarly severe trial. Now, it is not for me to pry into the secrets of hon. gentlemen opposite, I do not know what their domestic arrangements are, but for the sake of old acquaintance, I would say to the Opposition Cæsar that he had better take care of his hon. friend.

“Yon Cassius is a lean and hungry man.
Trust him not, Cæsar, he is dangerous.”

And while I know, as every one knows, that the leader of the Opposition, like his great prototype, is so compact that he is not readily accessible to fear, yet I think that if I could hypnotize that hon. gentleman, if I could do a little thought-reading and get at his inner thoughts, that hon. gentleman is pretty often saying to himself :

Would he were fatter ! But I fear him not :
Yet, if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So much as that spare Cassius.

Now, if I were so disposed and if time were no object, I think I could repay the hon. gentleman (Mr. Foster) in his own coin ; and it might possibly amuse the House, it might even possibly do him some good. But I am not so disposed, and so for the present, I purpose to part with my hon. friend with this one remark. Sir, if it be true that the sight of Satan reproving sin is a thing which causes wise men to reflect, what can be said of such a spectacle as the hon. gentleman presented to us the other evening ? Surely, Sir, the spectacle of a gentleman of the character and antecedents of the hon. member for York, gravely rising in his place to lecture this House on loyalty, on consistency, on the high standard of honour which should mark the dealings of one public man with another, is a spectacle which, as Mr. Thomas Carlyle was wont to say, is of a sort to make, not merely angels, but the very jackasses weep. However, Sir, I have more important work in hand, work of far greater weight than to analyse the character and proceedings of the hon. member for York. I recognize, Sir, and I think by this time that, far and wide, it has been recognized by all men who are capable of forming an opinion, whether on this side of the Atlantic or the other, that a crisis and a turning point have arrived in the history of Canada. Mr. Speaker, the task which lay before the Government when they undertook to revise the present tariff was, as I think every man on both sides of this House will admit, one of very great difficulty and very great delicacy. I do not for one moment admit that I or my hon. friends have been false to the pledges that we have made ; but I do admit that there was before us a divided duty. We were bound by every declaration that we had

made, we were bound by our oath of office, to devise and bring down a tariff which should give, in due degree and in due time, substantial relief to the great bulk of our fellow-countrymen ; we were bound, likewise, by the same obligation in bringing down that tariff, to exercise our utmost care and skill so as not violently to disturb existing interests ; and I trust before I take my place again, to be able to show to this House and to show to this country that this Government has made at least an honest endeavour to redeem both pledges.

Mr. Speaker, it was inevitable from the nature of the case that there should be some disturbance if we were to give any substantial relief at all. It was also inevitable, I fear, from the nature of the case, that we should give some dissatisfaction, particularly to those of our friends whose anticipations had been raised perhaps a little higher than circumstances warranted, and who thought that it would be possible, by one stroke of the pen, to wipe away the evil doings of eighteen years and to start exactly from where we had been in 1878. Sir, that was not possible ; but I think I may say to those of our hon. friends, and there are some of them, I know, who think that the Government has not moved fast enough or far enough, that if they will carefully and calmly study this tariff they will find that we have advanced a good deal further than at first they supposed. Now, I am not particularly anxious to defend this tariff in the abstract. I do not pretend to say, nor did my hon. friend the Finance Minister pretend to say, in introducing it, that this was an ideal tariff ; I do not pretend to say, nor did he pretend to say, that this was the sort of tariff which we would have liked to present to this House if he were acting, so to speak, *tabula rasa*, if we had an absolutely free field before us, if we had not to consider existing conditions which necessarily hamper and retard our progress towards the end we have in view. Sir, I do not pretend to say the tariff which we had the honour to submit for the consideration of this House, was a tariff which could be compared, nor would it be fair to compare it with such a tariff, as exists in the mother country. It is hardly as favourable a tariff as that which existed for many years in Canada, from the commencement of confederation in 1867 down to the present day. I do not pretend it is, we do not say that we have introduced an absolutely perfect tariff ; and although I must warn my hon. friends that a very clear, and a very strong, and a very plain case must be made out to warrant any alterations in the tariff resolutions once brought down, yet I am free to say, and I am sure my hon. friends beside me will endorse it heartily, that if it be made plain to the Government that in dealing with four or five hundred different items, we may have possibly made a mistake, or that, still more, we may have committed an injustice, we will not be too